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FM AMCONSUL CHENNAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0534
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 2164
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1060
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1287
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 0033
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0984
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 4932
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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS, DS/IP/SCA AND DS/ITA

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SUBJECT: TERROR SUSPECT ARRESTED IN BANGALORE

REF: 06 CHENNAI 2467

11. (SBU) Summary: On January 6, Bangalore City Police announced the arrest of Bilal Ahmed Kota, a Kashmiri also known as Imran, on suspicion of preparing a terrorist attack. The suspect was arrested at a Bangalore suburb from a private bus coming into the city from north Karnataka. Bangalore police told post they recovered an automatic weapon, ammunition, grenades and other items from the suspect. The police also told us Bilal had been trained in Pakistan and is known to the Jammu-Kashmir state police. The suspect is alleged to have resided for the past five years in the Karnataka tourist center of Hampi, where he operated a handcrafts store. A Karnataka police intelligence official told us that Bilal's primary mission and affiliations have yet to be determined. End Summary.

12. (U) Bangalore City Police announced the arrest of a 32 year-old Kashmiri, Bilal Ahmed Kote, also known as Imran, from a private bus enroute to Bangalore from Hospet, a town in the north Karnataka district of Bellary. A cardboard carton containing a Chinese Type 56 automatic rifle, four ammunition magazines, five Chinese-made grenades, a Thuraya satellite phone and SIM cards to access various local networks were recovered from the suspect.

13. (SBU) Bipin Gopalakrishna, Deputy Commissioner of Bangalore City Police, told post that the police have determined that Bilal had been a member of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Force in the 1990's and has visited Pakistan on several occasions. In 1990 he underwent basic military training in Muzaffarabad on the Pakistan side of the Jammu-Kashmir border. After returning to India, Bilal again made his way to Pakistan in 1994 and on his return journey he was arrested by the Border Security Force for illegally entering India. He was released, we were told, as there was little to link Bilal to specific terrorist acts. Subsequently he was picked-up by the Jammu-Kashmir police on suspicion of aiding Kashmiri terrorists, but he again was released. Bilal traveled to Pakistan in 2000, when he underwent a communications training program, and in 2005, when he allegedly met with senior leaders of Lakshar-e-Taiba, who gave him the satellite telephone. According to our police contacts, almost all of Bilal's communications with his handlers were via e-mail using Roman script, with the satellite phone being seldom used, apparently to avoid detection.

14. (SBU) Karnataka's Inspector General of Police Intelligence, Kishore Chandra, told post that for the past five years Bilal has lived in the Karnataka tourist town of Hampi where he operated a handcrafts store selling Kashmiri artifacts. During this period Bilal established a network of contacts, mostly in the local Kashmiri community which has a large presence in the handicrafts trade. Bangalore City Police's Gopalakrishna told us Bilal has

three siblings: an elder brother and two sisters. His elder brother is a driver in the Civil Supplies Corporation of the Government of Jammu-Kashmir; one sister is married to a vegetable vendor, while the second is yet to be married. Gopalakrishna said the suspect comes from a poor background and has completed middle school.

15. (SBU) Comment: The arrest of Bilal comes close on the heels of the arrests of two terror suspects in Mysore in December 2006 (reftel). As in the case of the previous arrests, the primary mission of the detainee remains unclear. Karnataka's police intelligence chief, Chandra, told post that the suspect could have been on a reconnaissance mission. As the affiliation of the suspect remains unclear, Karnataka police are working with their counterparts in Jammu Kashmir to establish the suspect's antecedents. Post will continue to follow the investigation and will report on further developments as they emerge.

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